



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

10/707,509

12/18/2003

Frederick W. Ryan Jr.

F-730-O1

1508

919 7590 01/12/2009

PITNEY BOWES INC.
35 WATERVIEW DRIVE
P.O. BOX 3000
MSC 26-22
SHELTON, CT 06484-8000

EXAMINER

VETTER, DANIEL

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3628

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

01/12/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/707,509	Applicant(s) RYAN ET AL.	
	Examiner DANIEL P. VETTER	Art Unit 3628	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 October 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 14-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Claims

1. Claims 14-32 were previously pending in this application. Claims 14 and 21 were amended in the reply filed October 20, 2008. Claims 14-32 are currently pending in this application.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's amendments overcome the rejection made under § 101 and it is withdrawn.

3. Applicant's arguments filed with respect to the rejections made under § 103(a) have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant correctly notes that Montgomery does not teach a reprint of the same label. However this has been acknowledged in the previous rejections and again below. Whitehouse is relied upon to show that reprinting the same label is old in well-known in the art of mail preparation. Printing and reprinting share many of the same characteristics and functions. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to use the fraud prevention techniques disclosed in Montgomery as applicable to original printing for the reprints discussed in Whitehouse. Examiner also maintains that Montgomery is sufficient to teach a negative print success indicator, although acknowledging that it is for a print request and not specifically a reprint request. Montgomery teaches that a second label is printed "if the printing process fails in some way" (¶ 0168). While it does not use the specific language "negative print success indicator," identity of terminology is not a requirement of a prior art reference. *In re Bond*, 910 F.2d 831, 15 USPQ2d 1566 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

4. Applicant's argument that Montgomery teaches away from the proposed combination and claimed invention has been fully considered but is unpersuasive. Applicant argues that Montgomery teaches away from the claimed invention because the reference discloses a second, different, label is printed rather than a reprint of the original label (as taught by Whitehouse, Abstract). Remarks, page 8. Examiner respectfully disagrees. Simply because more than one alternative embodiment exists in

Art Unit: 3628

the prior art does not rise to a teaching away. "The prior art's mere disclosure of more than one alternative does not constitute a teaching away from any of these alternatives because such disclosure does not criticize, discredit, or otherwise discourage the solution claimed...." *In re Fulton*, 391 F.3d 1195, 1201, 73 USPQ2d 1141, 1146 (Fed. Cir. 2004). Nothing in Montgomery's disclosure appears to present the reprinting as an unworkable solution. Moreover, if a reprint shipping label failed in the same way as an original printing, Montgomery's fraud prevention techniques would still discover it if it subsequently showed up in the mail stream and was flagged misprinted. Accordingly, the rejections are maintained.

5. Applicant also presents the claimed invention's advantage of not charging for postage twice. This feature is not recited in the rejected claims, and in any case is also taught by the secondary reference.

6. Applicant argues that a postage vendor ID cannot fairly be considered a "permit number," but does not address Montgomery's additional disclosure of "a postage vendor ID and user account number" (§ 0083), an identifier as a "meter or account ID" (§ 0140) and that an indicia can include a "Certificate Serial Number" (Table 2).

7. In response to applicant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971). In this case, the time based detection of McFiggans was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and is in the same field of invention (mail processing) as the other references and the claimed invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

Art Unit: 3628

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 14-18, 21-25, 28, and 29-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Montgomery, et al., U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2003/0101148 (Reference A of the PTO-892 part of paper no. 20070502) in view of Whitehouse, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,687,684 (Reference A of the PTO-892 part of paper no. 20080611).

10. As per claims 14 and 21, Montgomery teaches a method for detecting fraud by a user of a shipping label [and transportation item] having an identifier using a server comprising: receiving a print success indicator at the server, wherein the print success indicator is associated with a print request for the shipping label having a first identifier [and of the identifier that is associated with the transportation item] (§ 0127), and wherein the print success indicator comprises a response or a default indication if no response is received within an allocated response time period (§ 0168); receiving a list of identifiers at the server representing items processed by [and used in] a shipping stream (§ 0083); if the print success indicator is negative, reporting a potential fraud using the server if the first identifier is present in the list of identifiers (§§ 0168, 0176); and if the print success indicator is positive, reporting a potential fraud using the server if the first identifier is present at least twice in the list of identifiers (§ 0109).

Although Montgomery teaches that shipping labels are known to be reprinted in the event of a failure (§ 0020), it does not teach the particular request involved is a reprint request rather than a simple print request; which is taught by Whitehouse (Abstract). It would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Montgomery to support the event that user needs to reprint the same unused postage after an error has occurred (as taught by Whitehouse, col. 1, lines 53-59, col. 2, lines 7-12). Moreover, since each individual element and its function are shown in the prior art, albeit shown in separate references, the difference between the claimed subject matter and the prior art rests not on any individual element or function but in the very combination itself—that is, in the substitution of the reprint

Art Unit: 3628

request in Whitehouse for the print request taught in Montgomery. The combination would have been prima facie obvious because it is merely the simple substitution of one known element for another that could be implemented through routine engineering to produce only predictable results.

11. As per claims 15 and 22, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the methods of claims 14 and 21 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the list of identifiers is received periodically (§ 0117).

12. As per claims 16 and 23, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the methods of claims 14 and 21 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the list of identifiers comprise identifiers recognized for a period of time (§ 0086).

13. As per claim 17, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the method of claim 15 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the list of identifiers is received daily (§ 0117).

14. As per claims 18 and 25, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the methods of claims 16 and 23 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the list of identifiers comprises identifiers recognized during the prior one year (§ 0086). Montgomery does not teach the time period is the prior six months. However, it would have been prima facie obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to incorporate the time period is the prior six months because this is merely an optimized range of time. "[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation." *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955).

15. As per claim 24, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the method of claim 22 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the identifiers comprise identifiers from a plurality of sets of identifiers (§ 0087).

16. As per claim 28, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the method of claim 21 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the transportation item is an item selected from the group: envelopes, post cards, postage labels, labels and packages (§ 0081).

Art Unit: 3628

17. As per claim 29, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the method of claim 21 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the identifiers are selected from at least one set of identifiers wherein the set of identifiers includes one or more from the group: planet codes, delivery confirmation numbers, IBI indicia, identifiers including the combination of a piece count and permit number, and identifiers including the combination of a meter number and ascending register (§ 0095).

18. As per claims 30-32, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the method of claim 14 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the identifiers are selected from at least one set of identifiers comprising planet codes (§ 0140); identifiers including the combination of a meter number and ascending register (§§ 0008, 0083); and identifiers including the combination of a piece count and permit number (§ 0083; examiner is interpreting a postage vendor ID and user account number as a permit number; see also § 0097 (account-specific piece count), § 0140 (meter or account ID) and Table 2).

19. Claims 19, 20, 26, and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Montgomery, et al. in view of Whitehouse, et al. as applied to claims 19 and 26 above, further in view of McFiggans, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,032,138 (Reference B of the PTO-892 part of paper no. 20070502).

20. As per claims 19 and 26, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse teaches the methods of claims 15 and 22 as described above. Montgomery does not teach reporting a potential fraud if an identifier having a successful print indicator is not recognized within an expected package period; which is taught by McFiggans (col. 2, lines 56-60). It would have been prima facie obvious to incorporate the above teachings of McFiggans in order to automatically feed back information on undelivered mail (as taught by McFiggans, col. 2, line 60).

21. As per claims 20 and 27, Montgomery in view of Whitehouse and McFiggans teaches the methods of claims 19 and 26 as described above. Montgomery further teaches the expected package period is one period selected from the group of one day, one week, one month and six months (§ 0169).

Conclusion

22. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

23. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL P. VETTER whose telephone number is (571)270-1366. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 8am to 6pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571) 272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

Art Unit: 3628

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John W Hayes/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3628